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S E C R E T ABUJA 003193

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF, AF/W, AF/RA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2011

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [BE](#) [BY](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: DEMARCHE ON BURUNDI DEPLOYMENT

REF: A. STATE 210600

[1](#)B. ABUJA 3039

(U) Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter; Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S) Post will raise points (Ref A) with the GON at the earliest appropriate opportunity. However, Minister of State for Defense (Army) Lawal Batagarawa will be in Washington this week for meetings on the Hill and with the Department. Batagarawa, who attended preparatory meetings in Arusha and Pretoria, has been in charge of planning for the deployment. Batagarawa's presence in Washington provides an excellent opportunity for the Department to seek his perspective on the deployment, and to convey our understanding of the situation in Burundi.

[1](#)2. (S) While we should raise concern, we believe that it would be counter-productive to press the Nigerian Government not to deploy to Burundi. We should not be seen as speaking for Burundi, or South Africa, for that matter. In our view, the best tack to pursue would be for us to convey to Batagarawa an understanding that the South African contingent is currently under-employed and ask Batagarawa if Abuja has been in contact with Bujumbura about the deployment's timing. Additionally, if Bujumbura does not want the Nigerian deployment at this time, it would seem more appropriate that the GOB directly communicate this preference to Pretoria and Abuja. If we are the only ones carrying this message to the Nigerians, we will be seen as interlopers, and uninvited intruders, at that.

[1](#)3. (S) Finally, Department should be prepared for Batagarawa to raise his idea for a PKO deployment for debt swap arrangement (Ref B).  
Jeter